Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium storing a program that, when executed by a processor, causes the processor to:

receive a file from a client machine;

create metadata regarding the file, and wherein the metadata defines at least in part data management preferences for the file;

implement, autonomously of a user of the file, storage strategies for the file based on the metadata and in a namespace different than the client machine namespace; and

store the file on one or more storage devices selected by a software agent based on the metadata.

2.   (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium as defined in claim 1 wherein when the processor creates metadata the program further causes the processor to receive from at least one of the user or a system administrator a desired access speed for the file.

3.   (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium as defined in claim 1 wherein when the processor creates metadata the program further causes the processor to receive from at least one of the user or a system administrator a desired reliability for the file.

4.   (Cancelled).

5.   (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium as defined in claim 1 wherein the program further causes the processor to move the file to a different set of one or more storage devices based on the metadata.

6.   (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium as defined in claim 1 wherein the program further causes the processor to delete the file after an expiration of a period of time indicated in the metadata.

7.   (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium as defined in claim 1 wherein the program further causes the processor to provide the file to the user from a storage device without the user having to select the source from which the file is provided.

8.   (Previously presented) A computing system comprising:

a host computer that executes user programs;

a server coupled to the host computer;

a plurality of storage devices coupled to the server;

wherein the host computer communicates files to the server for storage on at least one of the plurality of storage devices, wherein the server appears to be a network storage device operating in a user name space and in a user file structure; and

wherein the server selects on which of the plurality of storage devices to store the files on a file-by-file basis based on storage characteristic preferences supplied for each file, and wherein each file is stored under a globally unique name in a global namespace of the server.

9.   (Previously presented) The computer system as defined in claim 8 wherein each of the plurality of storage devices has an access speed, and wherein the server selects one or more of the plurality of storage devices based on access speed preferences supplied for each file.

10.   (Previously presented) The computer system as defined in claim 8 wherein each of the plurality of storage devices has a reliability, and wherein the server selects one or more of the plurality of storage devices based on reliability preferences supplied for each file.

11.   (Previously presented) The computer system as defined in claim 8 wherein the server migrates a file from a first of the plurality of storage devices to a second of the plurality of storage device without direction from the user programs.

12.   (Previously presented) The computer system as defined in claim 11 wherein the server migrates the file based on expiration of a time period specified in the storage characteristic preferences for the file.

13.   (Previously presented) The computer system as defined in claim 11 wherein the server migrates the file based on obsolescence of the first of the plurality of storage devices as determined by the programs executing on the server.

14.   (Previously presented) The computer system as defined in claim 8 wherein the server deletes a file from the plurality of storage devices without direction from the user programs based on expiration of a time period specified in the storage characteristic preferences for the file.

15.   (Currently amended) A system comprising:
 a client computer;
 a server coupled to the client computer;
 a first storage device, distinct from the server, the first storage device coupled to the server and the first storage device having a storage attribute;
 a second storage device, distinct from the first storage device and distinct from the server, the second stage device coupled to the server and the second storage device having a storage attribute;
 wherein the server is configured to accept files in a user namespace and in a user file structure; and

wherein the server stores the file on at least one of the first and second storage devices in a global namespace different than the user namespace, the selection of the storage location made by the server based on the attributes of the storage devices and storage preferences for the file.

16. (Previously presented) The system as defined in claim 15 wherein the server further comprises:

a software agent that executes on the server;

wherein the software agent interfaces with the client computer and simulates the network storage device operating in the user namespace; and

wherein the software agent decides on which of the first and second storage devices to store the file based on the attributes of the storage devices and the storage preference for the file.

17. (Previously presented) The system as defined in claim 16 wherein the server further comprises:

a software service that executes on the server; and

wherein the software service stores the file on one of the first and second storage devices based on instructions from the software agent.

18. (Previously presented) The system as defined in claim 17 further comprising:

a first software service associated with the first storage device, the first software service executes on the server;

a second software service associated with the second storage device, the second software service executes on the server; and

wherein the software agent directs at least one of the first and second software services to store the file on the storage device to which the software service is associated.

19.   (Previously presented) A computing system comprising:

a first means for executing programs;

a second means for executing programs coupled to the first means for executing;

a plurality of means for storing programs and data coupled to the second means for executing;

wherein the first means for executing communicates files to the second means for executing for storage on at least one of the plurality means for storing, wherein the second means for storing to be a network storage device operating in a file structure of the first means for executing; and

wherein program executing on the second means executing selects on which of the plurality of means for storing to store the files on a file-by-file basis based on storage characteristic preferences supplied for each file, and wherein each file is stored under a globally unique name in a global namespace of the plurality of means for storing.

20.   (Original) The computer system as defined in claim 19 wherein each of the plurality of means for storing has an access speed, and wherein the program executing on the second means for executing selects one or more of the plurality of means for storing based on access speed preferences supplied for each file.

21.   (Original) The computer system as defined in claim 19 wherein each of the plurality of means for storing has a reliability, and wherein the program executing on the second means for executing selects one or more of the plurality of means for storing based on reliability preferences supplied for each file.

22.   (Original) The computer system as defined in claim 19 wherein the program executing on the second means for storing migrates a file from a first of the plurality of means for storing to a second of the plurality of means for storing without direction from the user programs.

23.   (Original) The computer system as defined in claim 22 wherein the program executing on the second means for storing migrates the file based on expiration of a time period specified in the storage characteristic preferences for the file.

24.   (Original) The computer system as defined in claim 22 wherein the program executing on the second means for storing migrates the file based on obsolescence of one of the plurality of means for storing as determined by the program executing on the second means for storing.

25.   (Original) The computer system as defined in claim 19 wherein the program executing on the second means for storing deletes a file from the plurality of means for storing without direction from the user based on expiration of a time period specified in the storage characteristic preferences for the file.